ON A HILL-TOP.

One afternoon, in Central park, when the late spring was making straneous efforts to assert herself by means of a hivering fringe of green hung upon nated boughs, and by a tinge of red, like a blush for her tardiness, ever the bushes of Pyrus japonica, the main drive offered the usual spectacle of pleasure-seekers on wheels, rolling at a discreet rate of speed between Fifty-Ninth street and One Hundred and Tenth street, and back again, while keeping carefully in view each other's equipages, horses, grooms, and gown. Not so brilliant in variety is this dress-parade of American fashion as that familiar to the lounger in 'the Bois de Boulogne, but sufficiently gay and changeful to enchain the watcher's eye during the hour or two when its glory is at the height. Passing in review the rapid succession of conches, lendary, victorian broughams wagonettes, Tearts, tilburys, and village-carts, sprinkled with less pretending bug ries and han om-cabs, a young man on horseback kept his spirited steed in check, curvating back and forth at the entrance of one of the equestrian roads crossing the principal drive, until a trig policeman began to cast upon him side glnaces of a decidedly investigating character. Evidently the young man's search was vain, for a look of annoyance came upon his open face, and giving his horse an unreasonable cut with the riding-stick, he at last consentate gallop away from the spot he had so long haunted. At that exact moment another rider, cantering lightly along the bridle-path, emerged from the trees ahead, bringing face to face with him a protty girl with golden hair, and a bunch of narcissus in the breast of her well-cut habit.

"You told me you were to drive with

golden hair, and a bunch of narcissus in the breast of her well-cut habit. "You told me you were to drive with your mamma!" abruptly exclaimed the young gentleman; to which the lovely Amazon replied, blushing slightly and towing her head, that she could not know she was obliged to render an exact account of her doings to every person with whom she might chance to dance at Mrs. Gardiner's ball. The groom coming up at this juncture diverted conversation from an apparently threatening channel. In the most natural manner our young gentleman's horse was turned, and the couple were making their manner our young gentleman's horse was turned, and the couple were making their way through the dreary suburb on the west side of the park, to emerge upon the beautiful Riverside drive. Here a wide and admirably made road runs parallel with the Hudson, whose tranquil bosom, skimmed by white-winged sail boats or scarred by bustling steamers along the channel, reflects on the farther side, the wood-crowned summits of the palisades and the colors of the sky.

"To enjoy the Riverside," the young man said, "one should resemble the 'true love' of the early English poet, who 'looks not back, his syes are fixt afore.' Let me recommend you to impose a forfeit on yourself for turning your head one moment from the left as we follow up the avenue. In this way you may be able to preserve the illusion that you are out of town."

"It's all of a piece with everything here," the girl answered, with a discontented glauce at the landscape on her right. There, amid a curious combination of squalor and ambitious architecture, she chanced to see the grassy slope in front of a squatter's shant, where in a wildsappear, of rubbits and to

grasy slope in front of a squatter's shanty, where, in a wilderness of rubbish and tomato cans, two sportive goats were assum-ing the attitude of the supporter of the British coat of arms. Beyond an open expan e of rocky hill-ide, streets and boule-vards in uarlous stages of construction were to be seen. Here a brand new foudal castle, looking as if it had come out of a bandbox. arose beside a whitewashel cottage with dilapidated roof and shutters. There a smart Queen Anne villa overtopped a readside saloon for the sale of bear to wayfares. Where a glimpse was caught of the elevated railway, the trains looked like caterpillars crawling along an immensely high and inexplicably long bridge. Gangs of workmen, steam-drills, piles of sand and granite, everywhere obstructed the neighboring streets. To see what still remained to be done might have decressed the most naturally sanguine spirit, save for the consoling evidence of what had been already done by the great city spurning ber island boundaries in this ager growth. To Miss Caroline Heath. aged 21, recently returned from a six years' residence in Europe, the incompleteness of American affairs in general was a source of continual comment. Edgar Barclay, on the contrary, the son of a western man, who after making a fortune in Cieveland had moved to New York to spend it, was a warm defender of our populiar institutions, and coming from other lips then those of flattering comments upon them with em-

"You are a most unreasonable person," he answered, as it was "A. few months ago you were raving about our atmosphere."

You declared yourself thankful to be a native New Yorker."

"Perhaps that was because I saw it was "Fernaps that was because I saw it was
the only thing you could not boast of," she
said, saucily. "I can imagine a Cleveland
man feeling quite awe-stricken by our antiquity. But for me! Have you forgotten
that ever since I was 13 years old I've been
roaming about Europe, absorbing bygones,
living in delicious old palaces where tragedies had taken place years and years and
years before I came there! Why I'm eat years before I came there? Why, I'm sat-urated with that kind of thing-tinged, like the bowl of a pipe. Think of Florence and Venice, will you, and contrast them with this. And then Eogland! Why, the last house mamma took there was a lovely old grange surrounded by a dry moat, and by trees and hedges and turf so green and soft and un-broken that it made one sleepy morely to stand at the window and look out."

"I should prefer to keep awake."
"Not if the only amusement you had was to walk down a pretty green path, where the trees met overhead, to call upon the rector and his wife. When that was done, we waited till they came back the little path to call on us. Then, too, it rained almost every day last summer. But it was enchapting all the same."

enchanting, all the same. New York exhilarating." of a champagne diet. Besides, everything is brand new. The houses smell of furniture polish. I want to rest my eyes on something belonging to the past."

They had now turned into a broad boule-ard, and followed it to an end, indicated

by the presence of workmen with their im-pedimenta making a barrier across the "Let us go on," Carry urged. "Yonder, on that hill top, I see a genuine old house that must have been there since the revolution

have a peep at it."

Apparently uninhabited but for a pale ring of smoke from the kitchen chimney, the old house stood in melancholy

solution upon a bluff overlooking the river. The avenue there in process of construction had re-blessly shaved off the near side of the hill, leaving exposed a steep and gravelly incline crowned with the straggling grasses of an ancient lawn. Around the white columns of the portico grew walnut and chestnut trees, and in the garden at the rear was seen a ruined summer-house, and covered beauty trees. the rear was seen a ruined summer-house, and several broken statues arising amid an unpruned growth of box. Cocking their ears cautiously at the unusualness of the proceeding, the horses consented to be guided up a precipitous path along the edge of the declivity. Barelay conscious of a feeling of relief when his adventurous young comrade had finally attained her wish, and stood facing the moss-grown portico.

"Nobody lives here, that's plain," said willful Caroline. "Mr. Barelay, I am determined to explore."

So saying, she slipped lightly from the saidle, grafiaral up has jampy habit, and ran around through the weedy garden at the side. Barelay, consigning his horse to the groom followed in time to see her engaged in active conversation with a deaf old dame who emerged from a mouldy kitchen at the rear.

"She says we may have water from the

kitchen at the rear.

"She says we may have water from the well, and leave to look at this lovely river view," cried the explorer. "It appears the house is owned by an old mailen lady, whose family has always lived here. If I may trust to my hitherto infallible powers of intuition, the mistrees is a little out of repair in her upper story, and the maid is afraid of her. Come, Mr. Barclay, turn away at this handle. How long is it since I have had the satisfaction of drinking from the 'moss-covered bucket that hangs in the well?' There, that's deliciously cold and pure. Do you see, this garden must have been a stately one in its prime. I wonder if the ancient dragon could be induced to let us have a glimpse of the interior of the house? I'm positively wild to try."

Nobody withstood Caroline, so Barclay was not particularly surprised to see her roturn from a second interview with the old woman, beckening him with a mysterious

woman, beckening him with a mysterious forefinger.

"We're to see the ground-floor. It is the hour for Miss Stillman's afternoon nap, when she never comes down-stairs. Hushi tread like a burglar, and follow me."

In the wake of the ancient guardian our two young people went from one room to another, filled with handsome furniture of the pattern peculiar to a contury ago. Old mahogany, fluted fireboards, stiff chairs, convex mirrors, black-framed mezzotints, knobs of brass or crystal, there ruled supreme, their sway undisputed by the appendages of modern luxary as seen everywhere to-day. It was in the best parlor that their guids came to a hait, waving her withered hand with a faint show of pride in its faded splendor.

"That's all there is to it," she said, in a croaking voice. "I guess them things is solid."

"Either I am dreaming or that portrait of the lady in the red frock with balloon slesves resembles you," Caroline suddenly exclaimed, turning upon Barclay an as-tonished gaze. She paused, puzzled by the

"My great-grandmother, great-aunt— what you will," said Barclay, langhing, "I wish I were lucky enough to be able to lay any weird respectabilities of this kind in the east, I have yet to be informed of it. My mother, who died in my childhood, was born west, and my father is a westerner, root and

branch."

"It is astonishing," pursued Caroline; and even the purblind eyes of the old woman lighted with something like ascent.

"She 'ain't no one belongin' to her I ever heerd of," croaked the old creature, pointing upward with her thumit. "The last on 'em to die was Miss Tabitha, and she's Miss Lois. They was great folks once, I've heerd tell, but that was before I came here. She was ninchin' noor till the city tuit the place. was pinchin' poor till the city tuk the place to run a road through, an' now they say there's a fortin in the bank for her. She don't spend none it, sartin sure. The two of us don't eat more'n'd keep a mouse from starvin', an' there ain't nobody else."

"I breathe freer." Caroline said, when, after presenting a gratuity to their guide, the two mounted again and rode out of the inclosure. "After all, I like the sunshine best. But I wish I had seen the queer old lady; and as to that portrait, it was simply your double, deny it as you may."

"I am more occupied in wondering if I can get my horse by that steam-drill down yonder," Edgar said. "He has a rooted objection to anything of the kind, and this path does not offer much room for antices on his part. on his part. Your gray is quiet, Miss Heath; you had better wait here, and let

me lead the way."

Hardly had he spoken when the engine Hardly had he spoken when the engine beneath them sent forth a sudden rush of hissing steam. Caroline repressed an exclamation of alarm. Barclay's horse, rearing violently, grazed the edge of the steep declivity, then set off on a run. Half way to the bottom he slipped, his rider falling over his head, the horse rolling completely over, and recovering himself to stand shivering with terror beside Barclay's prostrate form. Before a number of men from the gang at work below could reach him, Caroline was at his side, the groom following. Barclay, catching one glimpse of the ago-Barclay, catching one glimpse of the ago nized face bent over him, tried to speak reas nized face best over him, tried to speak reas-suringly, but fainted in the effort. Without consulting the young lady, the men ran up to the house upon the hill, returning with a shutter, upon which they carried the in-jured man gently along the path he had just descended into the house, laying him down without interference from its guard-ian in the dim old parlor immediately be-neath the portrait of the lady with the sleeves. The bustle of their entrance stirred from her solitude upstairs the other dweller from her solitude upstairs the other dweller in this silent mansion. Gliding down like a wraith came a tall woman dre with melancholy eyes and chill lips that

seemingly had never known a smile.

"Open the window and give him air," cried Caroline, unheeding the approach of the mistress of the house.

"Who gives orders for me?" she said, in a monotonous voice, "It is years since those front windows have been opened."
"It is a matter of life and death," answered the girl, imperiously, and without further opposition the stiff blinds were thrown back, letting in a flood of afternoon sunlight that flowed in a golden stream across the sufferer's temporary couch. Bar-clay's face thus revealed to view was un-

touched by wound or stain. He seemed quietly asleep.

"If the doctor would only come!" began Caroline, interlacing her cold hands. There was an interruption to the quiet of the room, a strange sound, half sob, half laughter, coming from the ghostly mittage of ter, coming from the ghostly mi tress of the house. Caroline looked up to see the old woman kneeling at Barclay's side, her dull eyes kindled into a sudden rapture of Professional Cards.

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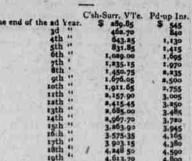
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